

# Engolo curriculum

An **Engolo curriculum** generally emphasizes the martial art's historical roots, cultural context, and distinctive techniques, blending combat and dance in a circle with music and singing<sup>[1][2][3]</sup>. While there is no universally standardized, formal curriculum—especially in its traditional context—available sources and descriptions highlight several key training components and foundational progressions:

## 1. Fundamental Elements:

- **Circle-based practice** accompanied by rhythmic music, clapping, and singing, reinforcing both technique and cultural tradition<sup>[1][3][2]</sup>.
- **Imitating animal movements** (especially zebras), incorporating agility, evasion, and acrobatics inspired by nature<sup>[1][2]</sup>.
- **Basic steps** involve small jumps, sideways stances, and fluid footwork, distinct from other dance-fight forms like capoeira's ginga<sup>[4]</sup>.

## 2. Technique Development:

- **Kicks:** Emphasis on circular (crescent) kicks, especially from inverted positions (such as handstands), and push kicks:
  - Front push kick (*chapa de frente*)
  - Back push kick (*chapa de costas*)
  - Side push kick (*chapa lateral*)
  - Revolving push kick (*chapa giratoria*)
  - Crescent kicks: front (*okupayeka, meia lua de frente*), reversed (*queixada*), back (*armada*)<sup>[1][2]</sup>
- **Evasive maneuvers and foot sweeps**
- **Takedowns and acrobatic transitions:** Cartwheels, handstands, and sweeping, flowing movements<sup>[1][2]</sup>.

## 3. Training Methodology:

- Practitioners often start as adults (often 18 or older), as the art was traditionally reserved for mature, emotionally stable individuals; beginners learn through observation, imitation, and sparring<sup>[4]</sup>.
- Learning emphasizes resilience, balance, and not reacting emotionally to defeat or being struck (“light heart” principle)<sup>[4]</sup>.
- Practice can be done on riverbanks, open sand, or village spaces, further highlighting adaptability and environmental engagement<sup>[4]</sup>.
- Training often involves **mock combat** to develop agility, balance, and coordination while reinforcing community bonds<sup>[3]</sup>.

#### **4. Progression and Cultural Aspects:**

- There is traditionally no formal ranking or mastership structure; respect and authority are earned through skill and demeanor<sup>[4]</sup>.
- More advanced practitioners explore sophisticated strategies, including inverted attacks and tactical deception<sup>[2]</sup>.
- The martial art is deeply entwined with ritual, symbolism, and spiritual significance, serving roles in rites of passage and reinforcing social ties<sup>[3][2]</sup>.

#### **5. Modern Interpretations and Adaptations:**

- Some contemporary programs or fusion systems (e.g., Mufti Engolo JiuJitsu or Afro Fighting Art) might structure Engolo training from beginner to advanced, integrating it with other African martial arts<sup>[5][6]</sup>. However, such curricula vary widely by teacher and school.

In summary, a traditional Engolo curriculum is **experiential and community-oriented, blending physical techniques (kicks, evasion, acrobatics) with cultural practice (music, ritual, circle-based play)**, and driven by participation rather than formal grading<sup>[1][2][4][3]</sup>.

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## **Details on how to do, rank requirements**

### **How to Do Engolo**

Engolo emphasizes **kicks, dodges, leg sweeps, and acrobatic maneuvers**, often performed in a circle with rhythmic music and singing. Movements are inspired by animal behavior (like the zebra's kicking), with combatants using explosive jumps and inverted positions (such as placing one or more hands on the ground), which distinguishes Engolo from other martial arts<sup>[7][8][9]</sup>.

### Key Points:

- **Base Step:** Practitioners use **small, continuous jumps**—not a set footwork pattern like capoeira's ginga. The stance is often sideways, with movement forward, backward, and to the sides. The hands stay close to the upper body, helping to avoid attacks and maintain balance<sup>[7][9]</sup>.
- **Kicks:** High, circular kicks are fundamental. A typical Engolo kick is a “mudada” or circular kick (similar to a capoeira wheel kick), delivered by **swinging the leg out and around** in an arc. The kick may be performed with either the front or rear leg. Flexibility and leg strength are crucial<sup>[10]</sup>.
- **Evasion & Sweeps:** Evasive maneuvers (dodging, jumping back, sliding aside) are as central as offensive techniques. Sweeps and takedowns often occur from crouched or hand-supported positions<sup>[7][8]</sup>.
- **Acrobatics:** Cartwheels, handstands, and other inverted movements are common, both as attacks and evasions<sup>[8]</sup>.
- **Continuous Rhythm:** Movements are **fluid and rhythmic**, performed with a sense of musicality and strategic deception, always within the circular gathering<sup>[7]</sup>  
<sup>[11]</sup>.
- **Mindset:** Practitioners are expected to have a “light heart,” remaining calm and not reacting aggressively if struck; this is crucial for skill development and respect for tradition<sup>[7][9]</sup>.

### Example Technique - Outside Wheel Kick (“Mudada” Style):

- Stand sideways to your opponent, loaded onto your front leg.
- Swing your rear leg outward in a circular motion, aiming for the head or upper body.
- The kick follows through so your leg passes the target and returns to stance.
- Avoid excessive chambering of the leg, to maintain deception and flow.

- Practice gradually to build leg strength, flexibility, and fluid recovery back to movement or another attack<sup>[10]</sup>.

## Rank Requirements

There is **no formal ranking system in traditional Engolo**. Historical and ethnographic sources emphasize:

- Skill, adaptability, and demeanor determine a practitioner's standing—**not belts or structured levels**<sup>[9]</sup>.
- Expertise and authority are earned through demonstrated proficiency and respected attitude in the circle.
- Engolo is learned *by doing*: through observation, participation, and sparring with more skilled players<sup>[9]</sup>.
- The concept of “mastership” is not part of the indigenous tradition, though some modern organizations may invent structured progressions, especially when merging Engolo with other martial arts for contemporary teaching. Such systems reflect those organizations’ needs, not traditional practice<sup>[9]</sup>.

## Summary Table - Engolo Essentials

Element	How to Do	Formal Progression/Rank
Base Step	Small, continuous sideways jumps	None; learned in play
Kicks	High, circular, fluid, often from acrobatic positions	None; skill-based
Evasion/Sweeps	Dodging, sliding, hand-supported moves	None; skill-based
Circle Play	All techniques within a musical group context	None; community status
Mastery	“Light heart” mindset, adaptability	Earned respect only

In summary, Engolo is **experiential, community-driven, and without formal ranks**: progress is marked by **skill, adaptability, and social respect** rather than structured tests or belts<sup>[7][9]</sup>.

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1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Engolo>
2. <https://panafrocore.com/2024/04/12/ngolo-engolo-the-african-martial-art-dance-and-its-influence-on-capoeira-and-diaspora/>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsTzoUvgubI>
4. [https://repository.essex.ac.uk/35062/1/Engolo\\_and\\_Capoeira\\_\[MAS\\_13,\\_2023\].pdf](https://repository.essex.ac.uk/35062/1/Engolo_and_Capoeira_[MAS_13,_2023].pdf)
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0JJ-HGICKY>
6. <https://mufti-engolo-jiujitsu.ueniweb.com>
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Engolo>
8. <https://www.historyoffighting.com/the-blog/traditional-fighting-in-africa-engolo>
9. [https://repository.essex.ac.uk/35062/1/Engolo\\_and\\_Capoeira\\_\[MAS\\_13,\\_2023\].pdf](https://repository.essex.ac.uk/35062/1/Engolo_and_Capoeira_[MAS_13,_2023].pdf)
10. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0JJ-HGICKY>
11. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsTzoUvgubI>